

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of Claims will replace all prior versions of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for covering a payload of a vehicle with a flexible payload cover, said apparatus comprising:

- (a) a suspended track;
- (b) a hoist, slidably engaged to said track, said hoist having a retractable line, said retractable line being maneuverable in multiple directions;
- (c) a spreader bar attachable to said retractable line, said bar having means for attaching to ~~a covering~~ the payload cover;
- (d) means to move said hoist; and
- (e) a rod attached to a support for the track and positioned at a height greater than the height of the payload, wherein the rod is supported independently of the vehicle and is positioned above the height of the vehicle and adapted to freely rotate in a manner whereby the rod rotatably supports a trailing edge of the payload cover that is draped over the rod.

2-3 (Cancelled).

4. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, ~~further comprising wherein said support further comprises:~~

- (a) ~~a support structure, said structure comprising a base, which base comprises a flatbed trailer, and~~
- (b) ~~and~~ a vertically extending side frame rigidly attached thereto; and
- (b) (c) rigid arms extending in perpendicular fashion from generally the same height of said side frame, said track spanning between said arms.

5. (Cancelled).

6. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 4, wherein said track is suspended a sufficient distance away from said side frame such that the track is suspended generally over an expected vertical centerline of a payload positioned beneath.

7. (Original) The apparatus of claim 4, wherein said arms are extended from said support structure at a sufficient height to overhang variable sized payloads positioned beneath.

8. (Cancelled).

9. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said means to move said hoist comprises an electronically operable remote controlled system.

10. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said means to move said hoist comprises:

- (a) a guide extending laterally from said hoist; and
- (b) a wire connected at one end to said hoist, running along said guide, and connected at the second end to an electronically operable remote controlled system.

11. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said means for attaching to a covering comprises spring loaded locking mechanisms.

12. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said means for attaching to a covering comprises a plurality of snap shackles.

13. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 4 further comprising:

- (a) means for a person to be secured to said apparatus to protect against falling from the payload being covered by said apparatus.

14. (Previously Presented) Apparatus of claim 13 wherein said means for a person to be secured comprise:

(a) a tether line suspended from said support structure in generally parallel fashion to said track; and

(b) a safety cable slidably engaged at one end to said tether line.

15. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for covering payloads, said apparatus comprising

(a) a movable hoist slidably suspended over a payload, said hoist having a retractable line that is maneuverable in multiple directions and that can be connected to a covering to be spread over the payload; and

(b) a rod positioned below said hoist and above an expected height of said payload, wherein said rod is rotatable about a substantially horizontal axis and is positioned to support in a freely rotatable manner at least a portion of the covering ~~may~~ pass as the covering is draped over the rod and drawn over the payload.

16-17 (Cancelled).

18. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the rod is vertically positioned between a highest point on the vehicle and a lowest point on the track.

19. (Currently Amended) A method of covering a payload of a vehicle, comprising:

- a. attaching the covering to a hoist;
- b. raising a leading edge of the covering to a height higher than a rod that is freely rotatable about a substantially horizontal axis and is higher than a highest point on the vehicle;
- c. moving the leading edge over and beyond the rod in the direction of the payload, whereby the covering passes at least partially over the rod;
- d. lowering the leading edge; and
- e. detaching the leading edge.